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A SHORT
ANSWER
To His GRACE the
D. of Buckingham's
P A P E R,
CONCERNING
RELIGION, TOLERATION,
AND
Liberty of Conscience.



L O N D O N:
Printed for S. G. and are to be sold by *Randal Taylor*, near *Stationers-Hall.* 1685.

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To the READER.

THAT I have written this Pamphlet, is plain; and the Reason of it as plain, in Answer to one Printed with His Grace the Duke of Buckingham's Name, wherein I think he hath not rightly informed himself, or his Readers. I have no Apology to make for the Printing of it, but only that I think a Sore always wants a Plaister till it hath got one. Of how dangerous Consequence to Religion, and the Peace of the State, such Arguments may prove; I hope his Grace did not give himself leave to consider. And should he take the pains to do it, it is not to be expected he should draw both Bill and Answer, and act for the Plaintiff and Defendant successively one after another.

How pernicious an Animal this Mountain and Wild Conscience hath been to England, is too well known; and how fatal Toleration would be, I hope in a few words to make evident in the ensuing Papers. And the Nation being in a fair way of Composure, the stirring of this extravagant Ferment, which hath run us into so many Fevers of State, seems very unseasonable at this time, and requires something to precipitate the Lees of Sedition, and keeping them from rising again, and turning the Wine of our Hopes into the Vinegar of Despair.

My Opinion in these points having ever been diametrically opposite to those of his Grace's Paper; and having been long convinced, that nothing could more effectually contribute to the Ruin of this Monarchy, Church and State, than Toleration and Liberty of Conscience, I have prevailed upon my self to expose my thoughts to the publick View and Censure upon this Subject and Occasion, as being thoroughly perswaded I am in the Right, as to the main, and not much solicitous for the fate of a five or six hours Paper, which the Ingenuous will pardon, if it be not exact; and the Rigorous would condemn, tho an Angel had writ it.

That I do not affix my Name to it, is because I do not design to be known. And tho I am not ashamed to have writ it, or think it will do me any disreputation, yet I am unwilling to seem arrogant in attempting to answer a Person of so Great a Character, and so Celebrated a Name; to whom I desire to be known under no other Name than that of,

His Grace's most Humble Servant,

And a most True Friend to the

Interest of ENGLAND.

A S H O R T
A N S W E R
To His GRACE the
D. of *BUCKINGHAM*'s Paper ,
Concerning Religion, Toleration, &c.

IT is a pretty odd Adventure, to see a Person of His Grace's High Character and Parts, enter the Lists, and advance himself the Champion of some things so much out of Countenance and Reputation, that even those who formerly owned them, would take it unkindly not to be thought wholly to have forsaken and abandoned them. And in truth, *Whiggism* in both its dresses of *Toleration* and *Persecution*, which made her so amiable to the *Noble Peer*, and others,

in the days of *Association*, is now with sorrow become so abominably superannuated, that she looks like a Cast Mistriss, scorned and contemned even by the Porters and Footmen: and it can be nothing but pure compassion and pity, sure, that procures her such a Glorious Protector.

But is it not as odd an Adventure, to see any person so bold, as to think upon such great disadvantages, of coping with so disproportionate a Combatant, as a Peer of the highest Rate of *England*, whereby he must render himself liable not only to all the force of Wit and Sense, but if he does not well guard himself with all Decency and Discretion, to the fatal and murdering blow of *Scandalum Mag- natum*. And in truth, if I had not put on the Armour of Conscience, I durst never have taken up his Grace's Gantlet: But I esteem my self invulnerable under that Mail, and dare confidently believe my Lord would not for an unwary slip prove

prove himself an *Antichristian*, by persecuting an innocent person, purely for what he believes his Religion exacts from him; especially considering, that his Grace's *Maxim* is infallible, which assures us, *That no man believes, because he has a mind to do so, but because his Judgment being convinced, he cannot chuse but believe it, whether he will or not.* Nor do I believe, should I be criminal in point of Difference or Good Manners towards his Grace, that he would by animadverting severely upon me, undo what he hath so publickly owned, as *an Opinion of which he hath been long convinced*; and to confute the labour of his brain by any action diametrically opposite to his *Hypothesis*. But for fear of the worst, neither my Nature or Education inclining me to any thing disobliging, much less rude, I will take care of my self: And tho I cannot, in approaching so near his Grace, be *procul a Jove*, yet I will be sure to keep my self *procul a fulmine*: And I should be

very angry with my self, if I should say any thing, which even his Grace may think beneath the Dignity of his High Character, for which I profess a most profound Veneration and Respect.

And my Lord being the Aggressor, I know he will not be displeased, since we differ mightily in Opinion about Religion, if I endeavour to defend my Belief, which I cannot help, very warmly, and with some *Opinionatré* : And should I chance to pretend to be Comical and Pleasant now and then, (a Contagion no man can almost escape that comes but near his Grace's Pen, which even in this serious matter, is very facetious); I hope he will look upon it but as my being stung with the *Tarantula* of his Paper, which may make me dance and caper, even contrary to my Nature and Inclination, by the secret sympathy that is in the unaccountable poison of being Witty.

I con-

I confess, my Lord writes with that taking air and pleasantnes, that it is impossible not to be delighted with it. But not to flatter his Grace, 'tis too much of that nimble Contexture, and seems to want not only the *temperamentum ad pondus*, but the *pondus* it self; and to make it in any measure currant, must have many Grains not only of Salt, but of Allowance too. And in truth, I cannot wonder to see a Peer write of Religion, *en Cavalier*; but do as much wonder to see a Noble *Cavalier* writing of Religion, as I should to see a Blew-Apron-Knight correcting *Euclids Elements*, or a Country-Clown drawing up Maxims of Politicks or Navigation. I cannot be induced to believe our Noble Author hath made Polemical Divinity, or the abstruse Notions of the Schools any one Scene of his diversion; and therefore his Reasonings are witty and pleasant, but not at all concluding; his Notions are very fine, and many of them very natural and true, but not

not too Logical. His Grace seems only to have done it as an Essay for his own diversion; and therefore hath not attended the Consequences which will necessarily and inevitably follow from his Conceptions, to the great disadvantage not only of Religion, which he would support, but even the Politick Frame, and Constitution, and Government of the World. I was once acquainted with an airy Gentleman, who would discourse mighty agreeably, and loved to maintain divers odd Opinions: and if at any time he was run a-ground by Consequences drawn from his Positions, he would cry, *a Pox upon Consequences; I hate these Consequences*: But I have more Honour for his Grace, than to believe him to be of that Gentleman's humor.

I do not design to read an Anatomical Lecture upon his Grace's Paper, or curiously to dissect each Nerve and Muscle. I hate hashing of Books, and serving them up with *Limon* and *Anchovies*, and shall

shall content my self without distorting his Sense, or weighing every Period, and scanning every Line, to deliver my thoughts of it in the Lump; and shall, for the sake of method, offer these things, as being the main matters wherein I take the Liberty to differ from his Grace's Sentiments.

First, I presume to say, That his Grace has taken a very improper Method in the whole, to confute the witty Atheist, or to establish Religion.

Secondly, That his Maxime concerning *Antichristianism*, and the Nature of Persecution for differences in Opinion, is built upon an evident mistake of the Nature, Reason, Intention, and Necessity of those humane Laws, which punish Dissenters, and which they and his Grace call Persecution.

And Thirdly, That the Toleration of several Opinions, which in his three Queries, he seems to press as necessary, both upon a Religious and Civil account,

is utterly inconsistent with both those ends.

For the first, in which the whole body of the Book consists, that I may answer concisely after my Lords method of writing; The Position upon which his Grace goes of proving a Deity, and every man carving out the measure of his own Worship, is too short in matter of Argument, and too long in point of Allowance. The changeableness of the World falls as much short of disproving its Eternity, as the several mutations of his Grace's Body from his Infancy to this Age, does of proving, that he is not the same *George Duke of Bucks*, that he was fourty years ago; nor if he takes notice of the whole System of the Universe, of which this Sublunary Body wherein we are, is but an inconsiderable point, he will find no such great Alterations, but that a witty Atheist may say with *St. Peters scoffers*, *All things continue as they were*; and it may as well have been

been always so, and continue always so as we see it does, notwithstanding that changeableness. Now if I were to discourse an Atheist about the Worlds Eternity, I would urge him with this Argument; If the World be Eternal, then it must of necessity be the Supreme and Ultimate Being and Cause of its own Existence: for if we suppose another Being before it, it is not Eternal. Now if it be the Supreme Being, it must not onely have all the Attributes, which necessarily fall in with the Conception and Natural Idea of such a Noble and Glorious Essence, but many more than we can imagine or conceive, and not onely so, but every part of it must have all these perfections in the highest measure, and even beyond the furthest flights of Reason, Fancy, and Imagination; such as are Invisibility, Impassibility, Justice, Power, Mercy, and Goodness, and a thousand others which, no Atheist can be so lost to Sense as to believe the World either in the whole, or in part, can be possessed of. Can the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Earth, or any of them reward or punish? Are they not all separately and con-

justly Inseparable and Inanimate? Nor will the little Story of the *Animæ Mundi* come in at a dead lift, to help the grosser matter. And he who supposes such a Being, separate and distinct from the Heavy Matter, grants what he denies, and supposes a Superior Being to the World which Acts, Regulates, and Governs it in all its Actions; and then the difficulty will return of the two Eternals, which shall have the upper hand? Whether they Act freely or necessarily? If necessarily, they must have had some Superior to impose that necessity, and then all is lost; if voluntarily, in allordinate Powers, one may refuse to Act, and then what becomes of the other? They must both of necessity cease to be; And a thousand other inextricable difficulties and impossibilities will follow, too long to be here trifled upon.

So that to me, the plain want of that absolute perfection which must be in the Supreme Being, and which is plainly visible is not in the World is a certain Argument, that it is not the Supreme Being; and if it must have a Superior, it must fall

fall short of that Superior Being in the essential point of Perfection, Eternity. For the mind of Man can by no Art be persuaded to believe the foolish imagination of an infinite Series of Causes, one hanging like Links in a Chain upon another; but must at last come to a point, That there must be one Ultimate, Supreme, and Absolutely Perfect Cause of all Things, which since neither the World, nor the *Anima Mundi* are capable of, or really possessed of those perfections, it must be somewhat Superior to them in all Things, and in this of Priority of Existence, which the whole World, with an Universal consent hath owned to be the Divinity.

But his Grace having I hope to the great disappointment of our witty Atheists, found out a G O D by his way of Reasoning; which I do not intend to disturb, but to improve: I can by no means be induced to be of his Opinion in his Deductions, concerning the Adoration and Worship of this Blessed Being. For in truth if his Argumentation be allowed solid and concluding, here is as fair a Plea for the

Alchoran as the New Testament, for Pythagoras his Golden Verses, to be as good Divinity as Saint Paul's Epistles. For if I be not mistaken in what his Grace calls that part of us, which is nearest a kin to the Nature of God and the Instinct of a Diety, which is to be our Guide and Director in choosing the best way for our Religious Worship of God; which immediately after he tells us, highly concerns every man to examine seriously which is the best way of Worshipping and Serving of God; that is, which is the best Religion: This must be Humane Reason, and not Humane Reason as regulated by any Publick and Political Reason of a Community, but according as every private persons Reason shall dictate to him; and then his consequence is, That it is one of the greatest Crimes a man can be guilty of, to force us to Act on Sin against that Instinct of Religion; and something a kin to the Sin against the Holy Ghost. Now did I not believe that his Grace is out of his Minority, I should suspect the Pennsilvaniian had Tutor'd him with this Quakeristical Divinity. But whether it be so or not, here are

are these inevitable Consequences will follow from this Position: First, that Reason is the sole Guide of every mans Religion. Secondly, that Divine Revelation is not necessary to Salvation. Thirdly, that it is a most horrid Sin to lead men out of the Errors to which Natural Religion and bare Reason must of necessity lead men, since its depravation. Fourthly, That men who believe a God, and follow the dictates of Reason in his Worship, may be saved in any, in all Religions, provided they know not a better: For Reason will never, can never lead us to the knowledge of the belief of a Trinity, the Incarnation; Death, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, or Divinity of the Son of God, the Saviour of the World. And how profane a Parent of Idolatry, Superstition, Will-worship, and a thousand absurdities in Religion Humane Reason is, all times, all places, all ages of the World convince us in Fact, beyond the possibility of a Denial.

Now had I been to follow his Graces blow, upon the gaining of the *Postulatum* of the Being of a Supreme and Perfect Power, and his Justice, Goodness, and Mercy; being such

such superlative Attributes of his Essence ; I should have sent my Enquirer another Road. And first upon his granting a God his perfections and the obligations of Humane Nature to him, I should have told him that he could not but grant by the strength of his own Reason, that this excellent Supreme Being ought to be worshipped and Adored, as the greatest Benefactor to Mankind ; that his Favour was to be had at any Rate, as the most Supreme degree of Happiness and Satisfaction. From his Justice I should have argued, that so great Goodness and Justice, the Rewarder of Virtue and Punisher of Vice, who loves those that love him, and therefore serve him, could not possibly leave that Noble Creature Man, to whom he had communicated something so near a kin to his own Nature, without some manifestation of his will and pleasure, and how he might be served acceptably. I should have sent him to inquire if any such thing were to be found, and among all the variety, recommended those writings which have Antiquity, and the greatest agreeableness to the Divine Nature, as the Genuine Results of the benignity of that just

just and merciful God. I mean the Holy Writings of the Inspired Pen-men, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists, who give such illuminations to the Soul, and such advances to Reason, such Rules of Piety and Devotion, as are no where else to be found, and which suit so exactly with the Idea of a Pure and Perfect Being. And in regard there may be some things difficult to be understood, I would for this sense and meaning of those places, have directed him to the Opinion of that Society of Men called Christians, their universal sense and practice, and to the Golden Rule of Vincentine Living for *Quod ubique quod semper propter omnibus id. vere quidem Catholicum est.* This would have shewed him a thousand Errors of times past, and as many of the present, in deviating either from the Letter or Publick Interpretation of the Revealed Will of God. This would have taught him to avoid the Errors of Rome, in transgressing an Apostolical Canon, by praying publickly in an unknown Tongue, locking the door of Knowledge from the People, forbidding Religious Orders to Marry, which is honourable in all men; denying the Cup

to

to the Laiety, against the Institution and practice of the first and best Ages of Religion, and the very Letters of the Command, *Drink ye all of this*; and a many more which I shall not insist upon. This would have taught him to avoid the Cruel and Inhumane Divinity of *Calvinists*, which his Grace lashes with so much Truth and Justice; and the barbarous Principles, and horrid Practices of Rubbelling, Covenanting, Associating, Excluding, pretended Protestants, who act so directly contrary to the Innocent Religion of those who are Christ's Sheep, that they are only a *Herd of Wolves and Foxes, Bears and Lions*, and the most Savage Animals in Protestant Skins. And it may be it would have led him into the Communion of the Church of England, the most Catholick Society of Men in the world, both in Doctrine and Practice, the best Christians, and the best Subjects that the Sun sees in all his Travails round the Universe; and here would I leave my Inquirer as in safe hands, wishing all Mankind in the same condition and capacity of attaining Salvation, and the fruition of the God of love.

Whereas

Whereas a *Jew*, a *Turk*, a *Pagan*, may all according to my Lords Hypothesis be safe, so long as they believe in their own either weak or obstinate Reason, which must not be imposed upon, for fear of Antichristianism, that they are in the Right, and Worship God; and with his Graces pardon, even *Mahomet* himself, will lay as good a claim to Heaven, at this rate of arguing, as St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*; and therefore I will leave this matter to his second and his better thoughts.

In the next place, I think the Maxime concerning Persecution for Differences in Opinion concerning Religion, and the fixing the Character of Antichristianism upon all such Prosecutions of Dissenters, is built upon a mistake of the Reason, Nature, and Necessity of those Humane Laws which Dissenters call Persecuting.

Now first I take it to be true, That punishing the Professors and Practicers of a True Religion purely for that Religion, whilst they continue such, by living innocently and inoff-

sensively in all things to the Civil Government, is real Persecution, and truly Antichristian, is being directly opposite to the Spirit of that Religion, and impossible to be done by any but such as are Enemies to that Religion: and thus the Heathen Emperours of Rome, and their subordinate Officers, were truly Persecutors, and the *Primitive Christians* truly Persecuted. *A short Tractate to shew with Novelties and evasions how a professedly benevolent Government*

But secondly, I take it also to be as true, that the punishing of Offenders, whose Religion is false or feigned, and who openly make a colour or shew of it, to carry on other Designes, is not only Lawful, but just and necessary. May not a Christian Government endeavour by Decrees to hinder *Mahometanism* or *Paganism* from rooting out Christianity, without being Antichristian for so doing? Certainly this is a very illogical Principle, and so far from overthrowing Atheism, that it is the high Road to establish it. And if Magistrats are to take care by virtue of their Office to support the Government of the World, the

the Peace and Happiness of their People; they must do it by Rewards and Punishments, the Methods of Heaven; better than which his Grace would do well if he would oblige us in shewing us others, and what and wherein they consist. Now if Men will set up Religions destructive of Peace, Charity, Order, Government, Obedience, and the Happiness of Humane Society, not onely all Religion, but Society is come to its *Conclamatum est*, unless the Magistrate who is *Vicar of Officij* Gods Vicegerent in rewarding the Good and punishing the Evil, interpose and shew himself really a Terour to Evil doers, and a Rewarder and Encourager of such as do well.

Thirdly, I take it, also for an undoubted truth, that by our English Laws, no person is punished, or as his Grace and the Dissenters call it Persecuted, purely for that which he calls his Religion, which is his private Opinion. And it raises my admiration to wonder, how his Grace, who hath had his share in the preparation of

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those Laws for the Royal Assent, should be so far mistaken in the nature and necessity of them. All the Laws of the Land shewing the Reason of their Penal Nature, to be purely Political, and not Spiritual; and it is the Overt Acts of Treason, Sedition, and Rebellion, and the fatal Consequences of pretended Religion, which the Laws endeavour by Penalties to obviate or prevent, and to punish, if men be so wicked or so foolish not to take the fair Caution that is given them. A man may be to himself of any Religion; nay, so great Indulgence does our Law give, that they may privately exercise it, provided they exceed not such a number besides their Family; by which it is most evident, that the Quarrel is not immediately at the Opinion, which is pitied because False, and indulged because the Assertors are obstinately Foolish, but at the practical Consequences, which by terrible Experience have been found to be fatal to the Prince and People, to the Peace and Prosperity of the Community: even that dreadful 35th of Eliz. tells us in the Title, that

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it is An Act to retain the Queens Subjects in
their due Obedience.

If there be severe Laws against Papists, Priests, and Jesuites, the reason of them was for their Turbulency, and continual Unchristian Machinations against the Life of the Prince, and the Peace of the Nation, for their Doctrines of the Lawfulness of Excommunicating, Depositing, and even Murdering Sovereign Princes, and disposing of their Realms and Dominions for pretended Heresie or Incapacity: Doctrines able to ruine the whole Earth, and lay the Foundations of Eternal Mischiefs to mankind. And if the Dissenters, on the other hand, complain of the severity of Penal Statutes, or suffer by them, it is because they have actually been guilty of the most horrible Crimes of Rebellion, and the most consummated Wickedness, in Murdering the Best of Princes, and overturning the Best of Governments; it is because the lewd Principles of Democracy are inconsistent with Monarchy, and contain in them the Seeds of

of Sedition, Rebellion, Anarchy, and Confusion: And though in Charity we may conclude, that all Dissenters of different Perswasions, are not so tainted with the worst of Principles, as to become Rebels and Regicides; yet there being an absolute impossibility to distinguish the Innocent from the Criminal, since none will acknowledge themselves such, the Innocent must be content to suffer with the Criminal, and partake of their Punishments, unless they can make us *Monus* his Windows, to see into their Hearts and Souls, not onely what they are, but what they will or may be. And to conclude this particular, I dare confidently aver, That neither the Intention of the Laws was to punish men for their different Opinions, or that any have been punished by virtue of any Penal or Capital Law, but upon the account of the Political, not Religious necessity, to secure the Peace and Safety of the Government. And if a Political punishing the Disturbers of publick Peace, Order, and Government, be so great a Crime, as in his Graces Opinion, to be near

a-kin to the Sin against the Holy Ghost, and to render men Persecutors and Antichristian ; the whole World, and all Ages, Places, Times, Governments, and Governours, must have been, are, and will be Antichristian and Persecuting to the World end ; even *David* and *Solomon* not excepted, the one the Wildest, and the other the Best King, being a man after Gods own Heart. And how his Grace will escape the lash of his own Censure, I cannot imagine, who hath, I presume, often given his Consent to penal Bills, and may yet to others, for the securing the Person of his Prince, and the Peace of his Country from Religious Rumbalts, and Conventicling Blunderbusses, as he is in duty bound, as well as from any other Irreligious Rebels. And upon the whole, if all those who prosecute Dissenters are Persecutors, and all Persecutors Antichristian ; his Grace will be at a great loss where to finde any sort of People in the World that call themselves Christians, who by this

Logick

Logick may not be proved Antichristian. And certainly this is a notable way of Arguing Men and Atheists into Religion, to lay that down as a Fundamental Maxim, which if admitted for Truth, will infallibly prove there never was any true Religion in the World; since it is impossible to finde any Society or Government, which hath not endeavoured to preserve it self by Rewards and Punishments, by Penal and Capital Laws, against Usurpers, Rebels, and Seditious Persons and Principles, though never so fairly gilded over with fine and glittering Titles of Holy Leagues, Holy Covenants, Gods People, and Saints; Vizors, with which ill men have endeavoured to conceal the most Flagitious Crimes.

Having

Having thus shortly run over the two main things, I hope we shall with more ease surmount the third, which seems, by being put as the String in the Tayl, to have been the efficient Cause of the Book, which Logicians tell us, is always first in Intention, though last in the Execution ; and that is, the necessity of a Toleration : For in truth, if Persecution be really Antichristian, and no Man ought to be forced in Religious Matters, then Toleration is absolutely necessary in order to the very Essence of being a Christian, a good Man, and able Politician.

Now if I be able to shew, that Toleration of all Religions, is neither good Politicks nor Divinity in a Monarchy, I think I shall have done with his Graces Paper ; and this I believe to unprejudiced or undesigning Persons will not appear either difficult, or impossible to be proved.

First, therefore, It is ill Divinity, unless my Lords new Scheme of the Possibility of being saved by the conduct of Humane Reason in any Religion which acknowledges a God, and teaches Morality, be granted for a Truth. And if it should, I cannot see any manner of necessity of Faith, or Christian Religion, nor, according to this Divinity, was the Incarnation of the

Son of God so great a kindness to the World, as all Pious Men believe, if Men might go to Heaven before this Stupendious Mercy was known to them, or may so still by the help of that Instinct which his Grace tells us is so near a-kin to God ; and we must now after almost 1700 Years come to question the truth of Canonical Scripture, which assures us, there is no other Name under Heaven by which Salvation is to be obtained, but the glorious and the blessed Name of Jesus, the Saviour of the World.

Again, It is most certain, that as there is but one God, so there is but one Faith, and one Truth. Whereas there are many Errours, and Doctrines of Devils in all dresses, even that of Christian Religion. Now these will all plead as strongly for Toleration and Liberty of Conscience as the true Religion, and upon my Lords Hypothesis will have as undoubted a Right to it. So that the whole World must be suffered to continue in damnable Errours and Heresies, which they call Religion ; and no Person under Penalty of being guilty of one of the greatest Crimes, and being Antichristian, must punish them for their blasphemous Tenents, or charitably indeavour by the fear and terrour of Humane Laws and Penalties, as well as by Reasons

Reasons and Arguments, to oblige them to procure a better information of their Understanding, and a clearer Notion of these necessary Truths wherein they have been, by their folly and obstinacy, mightily, and it may be long mistaken, for want of the Rod of Correction to cure them of that folly which is naturally bound up in the Hearts of the Children of Men.

Now if it be true as it must, if we believe every Word of God is true, That no Man can be saved, but by comming to the knowledge of the Truth by Supernatural Revelation, and that they must all be damned who believe a lie; that there is but one Name to give Salvation, and one Truth to be believed: Is it not a very fine way of leading Men to that glorious Truth and Light, to tell them, all who pretend to it have it, how far remote from it soever; and to render it almost morally impossible, among so many authoriz'd Counterfeits, to find the real Truth! And is it not a charitable Doctrine to give Men Liberty of Conscience to go headlong to the Devil for God's sake, without endeavouring to stop their Career, when we see them mounted upon the blackest and most furious Steeds of damnable Errours and Heresies? Will his Grace think it convenient to Tolerate the Conscience of

a Calvinist, who rides Whip and Spur upon the *Pegasus* of his Sanguinary Divinity, and has the blasphemous impudence to compare Almighty Mercy, which he says Gods Revealed Will seems to offer to all, to be only like the Artifice of a little Vermin-catcher, who baits his Trap with it, only that by their refusal, to which they are precondemned, by his secret Will, he may have something to say against them? And were I at leisure to write, or his Grace to read, I could furnish him with a Bill of *Itches* of this Nature, in the Opinions of our several Dissenters, longer then a Taylor of the greatest Faith ever trusted a promising Courter for. But let this pass only with this Remark, that if it were for my life, that I indeavoured either to make a witty Man an Atheist, or to propagate Atheism in the World, I would desire no other Favour or Foundation but a Toleration of all Opinions, and Liberty of Conscience to effect it.

Nor is Toleration worse Divinity then Politicks. I cannot say how it may stand with the Nature of a Commonwealth, though, because our Republicans are so fond of it, one would think it calculated for their Meridian; but certainly, not only Reason, but dreadful Experience have assured us, it is inconsistent with

with Monarchy. Nothing can make a Monarchy Great and August, but the Love and Union of the People; and if his Grace will enquire of *Lewis the Fourteenth*, he will inform him, that is his Opinion; and indeed, nothing begets greater Divisions and Animosities in a Kingdom, than Religious Feuds, which weaken its Power at home, and Reputation abroad; but where these diversities in Opinion about Religion, all meet as in a Center, in the Point of the Lawfulness for the Sake, or Name, or Cause of Religion; for Subjects to take up Arms, to Dethrone and Assassinate privately, or publickly to Murder their Prince, and subvert the Government, as the Principles of all Covenanters, Associators, and Excluders do, I appeal to all Crowned Heads, to all Persons who have any share in Government, to all Ministers of State and Polititians, nay, even to his Grace himself, whether such dangerous Principles, and Persons Poisoned with them, are not so far from deserving Toleration, as to be most pernicious and intolerable in any Monarchy, that desires, or expects to be safe.

But what need we to argue from Reason, when Fact is so evident? Has not Indulgence, Toleration,

Toleration, and Liberty of Conscience murdered one King, set up a thousand Usurpers, made *England* suffer a thousand miseries, and cost this Nation many thousand Lives, many Millions of Treasure ! His Grace had a share, and a large one, in the effects of that Liberty of Conscience : It was a Conscientious *Felton* that robbed him of a Noble Father, and the World of a most Illustrious Life ; it was a Conscientious Rebel that slew his Brother ; it was Conscientious Rebels that Sequestred his Estate, Imprisoned his Person, and would have taken away his Life ; and if he has a mind to run the Gantlet again through all those Risques of Fortune, I would recommend him to a Toleration, and Liberty of Conscience, to gratifie his desires ; for I dare assure him, a Ducal Coronet is no more a Protection against Conscience, when once it takes the Field, than an Imperial Crown, or a much hated, though Innocent, Mitre.

Were that late Rebellion onely the single dismal Extravagance of Conscience grown Frantick by Indulgence, or wantonly Cruel by too much Liberty, something might be alledged in mitigation of its Crimes : But it is

a Wild Creature in Dissenters, whose Chain is no sooner loose, but it flies at the Throat of its Keeper. And no Man can doubt of this, who reflects upon the Troubles and Dangers which have befallen our late Sovereign, and His Illustrious Brother our most Gracious King, which must date their *Aera* from the last Indulgence; for no sooner had the Dissenters gained that Point, but they threw at all; and the good and loyal Subjects of the Church of *England*, the best Supporters of the Crown, being discouraged, the Faction grew Rampant to the highest Degrees of Insolence imaginable, and wanted but little of pushing on a more dreadful Revolution than that of Forty one; For who were the Petitioners, the Addressers, the Life and Fortune Men, the Associates, the Exclusioners, the *Rye*-house Conspirators, but the great Friends to the Dissenters, to Liberty of Conscience and Toleration? And who were to assist these mighty Undertakers, but the Dissenters, the Band of Pensioners to this pretended Conscience? And whoever Indulges those who plead Conscience, opens a secret Sally-port to let in Traytors disguised under the Name of Tender Conscience, betrays a Principal Gate of the Government

to his Enemies, and for one Conscience really Tender, will find a thousand as hard as Iron, and as sharp as Steel, and as mortal too, in a Dissenters Hand. And I cannot but infinitely admire at that Passage in the Epistle, where his Grace hopes *a Consideration of the Present State of this Kingdom, if it could sink deep enough into Mens Hearts to make them endeavour, now, to promote a true Liberty of Conscience, would make the Nation happy*; or at his foreseeing, without pretending to Prophesie, *that the contrary will terminate in a general Discontent, the dispeopling of our Country, and the exposing us to the Conquest of a Foreign Nation*. Whereas in Fact, as well as plain Reason, the direct contrary is most evident. Division hath generally been the Fore-runner of the Fate of States and Kingdoms, and to give Men leave to divide and sub-divide into ten thousand Fractions, is the ready way to sow the Seeds of Discords, Animosities, and everlasting intestine Quarrels; to expose us perpetually to the dangerous Conspiracies of Ambitious, Turbulent, and Factious Republicans, and to put us into the next disposition to become a Prey either to Foreign Invaders, or Domestick Usurpers. It is the most undoubted way to ruine all

all Religion, and put us out of the Protection of the Divine Mercy and Goodness; It is the most compendious way to ruin the Church of *England*, of whose stedfast Loyalty, and of whose ability to support the Crown, how despicable or inconsiderable the Faction have endeavoured to render it, both his late Majesty, and our present Gracious King have had, and have owned too great Experience of, to be doubted or disputed; and should that Pillar be taken from the Throne by Toleration, a man shall not need to Prophesy what the Commonwealth-Conscience-men would do with the Monarch, and with the Monarchy; nay, should the Church of *England* be discountenanced and discouraged by Toleration, so as to recede from its active Loyalty in opposing the Dissenting Faction, no knowing or observing man but must dread the terrible and unavoidable Consequences of their betaking themselves to a passive Loyalty; and it is easie to guess how deplorable a misfortune it would be to the King and Nation to be at the Discretion and Mercy of the Conscience of the Faction. But God be praised, who hath conducted his Majesty to the Royal Throne, through the Tempestuous Sea of Assotiating, Assassinating, and Excluding

ding Consciences, which hath given him a sufficient Experience how far he may trust them, and be safe. And God be praised, we have his Royal word, which we esteem as sacred and inviolable as the Laws of the *Medes* and *Perians*, for our comfort and protection; nor is there any person, who hath the least sparks of Generosity himself, or is even at the remotest distance acquainted with that glorious Character, which hath rendred him so conspicuous to the whole Earth, as a Prince of the most generous Constancy and Firmness to his word, but will believe it with as much Confidence as humane certainty is capable of.

I have but three or four Words more to add to his Graces Questions, and I shall herein follow his Method.

First, Whether Jesus Christ, who himself taught and practiced Subjection to Government, did not believe Sovereign Power had Authority to maintain the Order of Society by Rewards and Punishmets; and whether my Lord hath confidered, that spiritual Punishments are far more Rigorous than Temporal; the Chains of Darkness, than humane Imprisonments; eternal Damnation, than pecuniary Penalties; Banishment from Heaven, than Exile upon Earth; Excommunication, than a

petty

petty Fine? And that therefore, whether he who would have men compelled by the greatest punishments, and the Terrors of them, to become Christians, hath not done more to force men to be Religious, than all the Powers of the Earth ever have done, or ever can do? And lastly, whether by his Graces Maxime, he may not incur the horrid Consequence of proving even the Apostles of Jesus Christ, who teach this Doctrine, to be Antichristian, and another not fit to be named. For his Grace is to know, that the nature of, neither any Spiritual or Temporal Law, is purely Penal, but intended primarily to prevent the danger it prohibits, and to punish only secondarily, where it meets not with that first effect ; and yet the dread of Punishment is the only force that can affect humane Nature; nor do humane Laws pretend to inforce any other way, than according to the Methods prescribed and practiced by the most Wise God ; and even yet, this force is also the highest Reason.

Secondly, Whether there being a hundred Monarchies happy without Toleration and Liberty of Conscience, to one Republick that allows it with Restriction, and whose future Fate we are ignorant of, and whether that may not in time prove its ruin; it be not a hundred to one, that a Monarchy shall be more flourishing, safe and

and lasting without Toleration and Liberty of Conscience than with them. Thirdly, Whether it be not Cross and Pile, whether a man who may be of any and of all Religions, will be of any, or of none at all.

And to conclude with my Friendly advice, Let all men cherish, promote and propagate that Religion, which renders them the best Subjects to God and the King; and endeavour to convince as many as they can by their Reason and their Virtue, and by all lawful ways to discourage all Rebellion and Sedition, Disloyalty and Faction, let their Clamours be never so loud against Persecution, and for Tolerance and Liberty of Conscience under pretence of Religion. For assuredly this Nation shall never be happy so long as those, whose Principles lead them to cutting of Throats for Conscience-sake, make such a stir for the Liberty of Conscience. Nor will any thing contribute more to our Peace and Safety, than taking the Wifes mans counsel, *My son, fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with those who are given to change: for their calamity shall come suddenly, and who knoweth the ruin of them both?*